



# Committee on the Assessment of NIH Research on Women's Health

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# ABOUT BMMA



The **Black Mamas Matter Alliance, Inc. (BMMA)** is a national network of Black women-led organizations and multi-disciplinary professionals who work to ensure that all Black Mamas have the rights, respect, and resources to thrive before, during, and after pregnancy.

BMMA honors the work and historical contributions of Black women's leadership within their communities, and values the need to amplify this work on a national scale. For this reason, BMMA does not have chapters.

The alliance is composed of existing organizations and individuals whose work is deeply rooted in reproductive justice, birth justice, and human rights frameworks.

BMMA functions as the premiere Black Maternal Health Professional Organization, centering the technical, training, and developmental needs of the Global Black Maternal, Perinatal, and Reproductive Health Workforce through the following goals:

### **CHANGE POLICY**

Introduce and advance policy grounded in the human rights framework that addresses Black maternal health inequity and improves Black maternal health outcomes.

### **CULTIVATE RESEARCH**

Leverage the talent and knowledge that exists in Black communities and cultivate innovative research methods to inform the policy agenda to improve Black maternal health.

### **ADVANCE CARE FOR BLACK MAMAS**

Explore, introduce, and enhance holistic and comprehensive approaches to Black mamas' care.

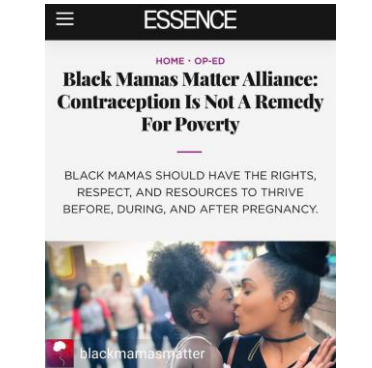
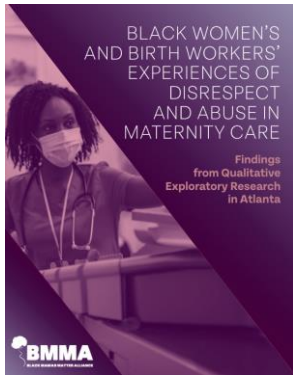
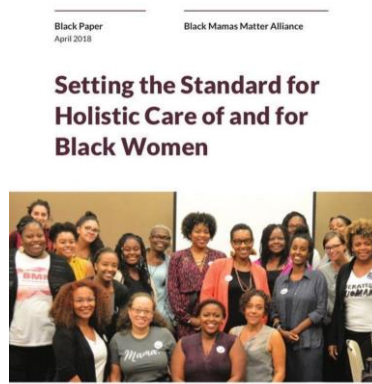
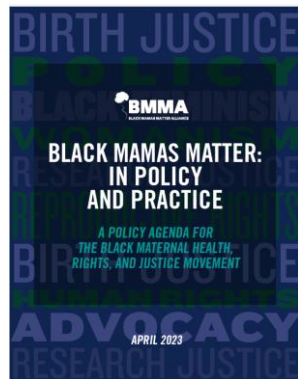
### **SHIFT CULTURE**

Redirect and reframe the conversation on Black maternal health and amplify the voices of Black mamas

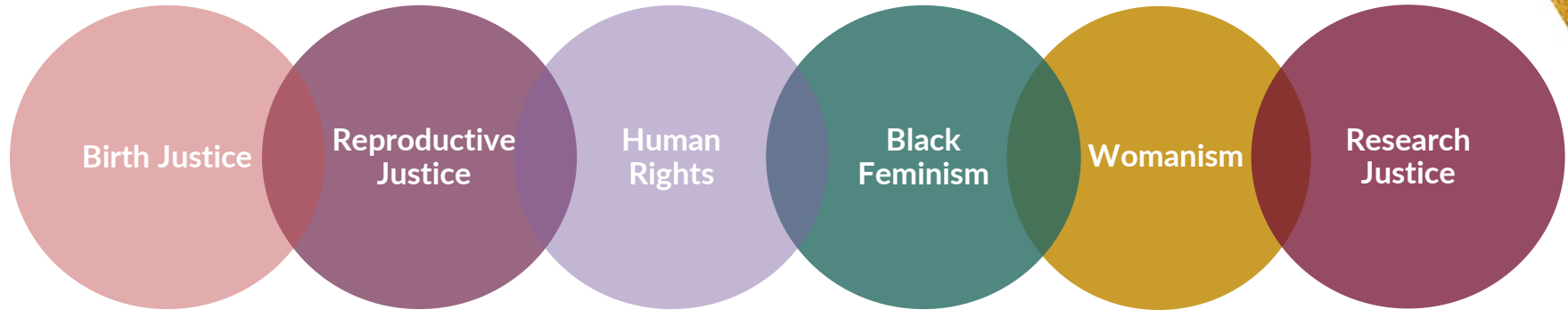


# PUBLICATIONS

Learn more at  
[blackmamasmatter.org/literature](https://blackmamasmatter.org/literature)



# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS



Mama Shafia  
Monroe



Loretta Ross



Fleda Mask  
Jackson, PhD



Patricia Hill  
Collins, PhD



Layli  
Maparyan, PhD

# PRESSING GAPS IN WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RESEARCH

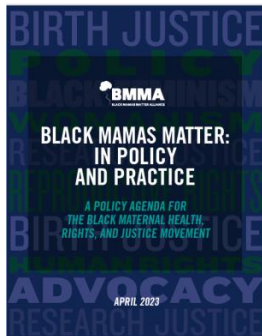
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# HISTORICAL & CURRENT CONTEXT



- Throughout the 20th century, phenomena such as the eugenics movement, forced sterilizations, welfare reform, and long-acting reversible contraceptive (LARC) coercion and unethical testing demonstrated the ways Black women and birthing people were dehumanized and deemed hypersexual, overly fertile, and undeserving mothers.
- Today, Black women and birthing people are disproportionately impacted by the maternal health crisis in the United States, restrictions on abortion and contraceptive care, and the broader, state-sponsored assault on full spectrum maternal, sexual, and reproductive health care access unfolding in the United States.
- Even when Black women and birthing people do access health care, it is met with experiences of racism, obstetric violence, neglect, and abuse from individual providers and the broader health systems.
- Fortunately, Black scholars and activists have created the frameworks, care models, principles, and tools we need to ensure that all women and birthing people can access the full spectrum of maternal, sexual, and reproductive health care.



Roberts D. Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group; 2014. 402 p.

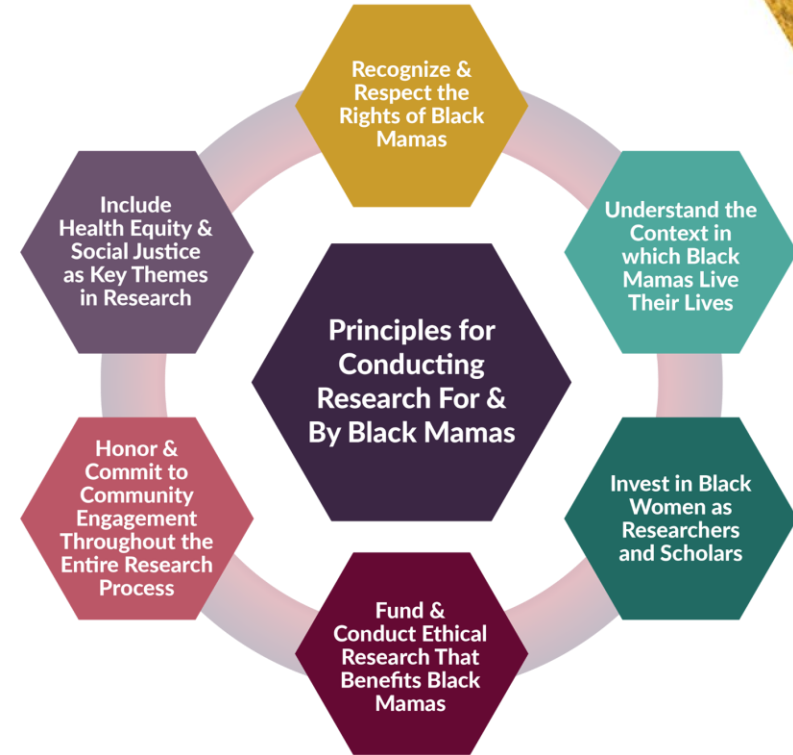
Ranji U, Jul 15 IGP, 2022. What are the Implications of the Overturning of Roe v. Wade for Racial Disparities? [Internet]. KFF. 2022 [cited 2022 Nov 22]. Available from: <https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/issue-brief/what-are-the-implications-of-the-overturning-of-roe-v-wade-for-racial-disparities/>

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# BMMA'S RESEARCH PRINCIPLES

- Despite the historic and ongoing practice of unethical research on Black women and birthing people, BMMA recognizes the power and potential of research to transform our lives for the better.
- BMMA strongly supports research activities that respect, include, and center Black women and birthing people across their identities and experiences - most especially, research endeavors that fully utilizes Black women's leadership in research methodologies, scholarship, and project activities.
- This kind of research can help identify solutions to some of the most pressing issues as well as uplift solutions that Black women and birthing people have already identified and implemented in their communities.





# BMMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The following policy recommendations outline BMMA's research principles in practice, as well as specific applications in the realms of maternal mortality review committees, maternal/perinatal quality collaboratives, clinical trials and experimentation, antiquated clinical categories that are rooted in anti-fatness and size discrimination, and data disaggregation.

Invest in, hire, consult with, and adequately compensate 1) Black women and birthing people as researchers and 2) Black-led and centered community-based organizations conducting perinatal and reproductive research and/or quality improvement activities. Fund historically underfunded reproductive health research areas, such as abortion, contraception, ART/infertility, and lactation, particularly as they relate to the experiences and outcomes of Black women and birthing people.

Significantly develop capacity for and presence of Birth Justice, Reproductive Justice, Human Rights, Black Feminism, Womanism, and Research Justice in the work that research institutions propose, conduct, and fund.

Adopt Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR), Participatory Action Research (PAR), and other Emancipatory Research Models (ERM) in research activities.

# BMMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Support Black-led and centered community-based organizations with resources and funding to implement their own solutions.

Design and implement clinical trials that are equitable and inclusive of a wide range of identities, including Black women and birthing people of all sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, sizes, abilities, colors, nationalities, ethnicities, languages, immigration statuses, marital statuses, religions, housing statuses, occupations, ages, etc. Include Black pregnant and lactating people in clinical trials and provide accommodations for their inclusion in research activities.

Engage in Black-led accountability and transformative justice processes in response to historic and ongoing research injustices and bioethics violations inflicted on Black women and birthing people.

Systematically identify and debunk inaccurate and antiquated medical research and practices rooted in anti-fatness and size discrimination, including 1) reliance on the Body Mass Index, 2) research that treats “obesity” as a disease and a causal (rather than correlative) factor in maternal mortality and morbidity, and 3) other related theories and practices.

Invest in research on experiences with anti-fatness and size discrimination for Black women and birthing people in the healthcare system, including mistreatment, abuse, neglect, misdiagnoses, and delayed and/or low-quality care.

# BMMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Invest in the development of health equity impact assessment tools to evaluate the intended and unintended consequences of community initiatives.

Study the use of new technologies in maternal health care to prevent racial and ethnic biases from being built into maternity care innovations.

Invest in data collection that is disaggregated by identities, including sex assigned at birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, nationality, immigration status, language, age, and ability, among others.

Involve priority populations in decisions regarding data disaggregation and consider intersectional approaches to data disaggregation.

\* The full description and listing of recommendations can be retrieved by accessing BMMA's comprehensive Policy Agenda at [blackmamasmatter.org/policy-agenda](https://blackmamasmatter.org/policy-agenda)



# CULTURE SHIFT PROGRAMS

Learn more at  
[blackmamasmatter.org/bmhw](https://blackmamasmatter.org/bmhw)



**BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH WEEK 2024**

Our Bodies **STILL** Belong to Us: Reproductive Justice **NOW!**

Join us April 11-17 for a week of activism and community building for Black Mamas! In solidarity with National Minority Health Month and the International Day for Maternal Health and Rights, Black Mamas Matter Alliance founded BMHW to raise awareness, inspire activism, and strengthen organizing for Black maternal health.

#BMHW24  
#BlackMaternalHealthWeek

[WWW.BLACKMAMASMATTER.ORG/BMHW](https://WWW.BLACKMAMASMATTER.ORG/BMHW)

**BMMA**  
BLACK MAMAS MATTER ALLIANCE

Learn more at  
[blackmamasmatter.org/bmhc24](https://blackmamasmatter.org/bmhc24)



BLACK MAMAS MATTER ALLIANCE

**2024 BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH CONFERENCE AND TRAINING INSTITUTE™**  
SEPTEMBER 12-14, 2024 | ATLANTA, GA

**LATE-BREAKING ABSTRACT NOW OPEN!**

UNTIL MARCH 18TH (11:59 pm EST)

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR!

**TO SUBMIT VISIT**  
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